

THE PERSECUTION OF ŚAIVAS AND THEIR SOJOURN TO SOUTH INDIA FROM SOUTH-EAST ASIA DURING 12TH-13TH CENTURIES

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Abstract

Burmese historians assert that history starts with Anawrahta, who was the first king to unite different kingdoms and make Burma into a strong kingdom involving in maritime trade, education, religious reformation etc. He replaced the existing belief system with Theravada Buddhism, and thus the other faith believers were persecuted. Before 11th century CE, definitely, history was there, believers lived and they were Hindus, both Śaivites and Vaishnavites. During the persecution, most of them were converted to Theravada Buddhism and the rest escaped to India. After 12th - 13th centuries, as the Chinese and Arabs / Mohammedans started dominating, the Buddhist sects divided further and they could not tolerate with the Indian faiths. The conversion that had gone unchecked subverted the various believers. Not only did the converted Buddhists fight each other, but also with Vaishnavites and Śaivites. The converted Vaishnavites and Śaivites, because of the political compulsions fought with each other under new Buddhist banners, leading to downfall of Hindus. With the political patronage, the extreme Theravada sects engaged in the destruction of places of worship. The archaeological evidence and the remnants of the sculptures prove the fact. Therefore, with the available evidences and old books, correlating with the data, the history has to be written and preserved for the progeny.

Keywords: Śaiva, South India, Asia, Anawrahta, Buddhism, Theravada.

Anawrahta (1044-1077 CE) persecuting Pre-Theravada believers

The appearance of Anawrahta [Maha Yaza Thiri Aniruddha Dewa 1014-1077 CE] and his dynasty in the 12th century CE have been inexplicable with the available historical evidence¹. Burmese historians assert that he was the first king to unite different kingdoms and make Burma into a strong kingdom involved in maritime trade, education, religious reformation etc. Interestingly, Anawrahta, like Rajendra Chola, classified cities and towns for taxation purposes, probably after conducting a proper survey. He improved irrigation and made lands fertile with grain production. He replaced the existing belief system with Theravada Buddhism², thus the other believers were persecuted. Although he could control, contain and decimate the earlier believers, the "Nat worship" posed a great challenge to him. The Ari monks had been influential and they did not want people to be converted to Buddhism. Therefore, he took severe action and enslaved them to become soldiers of his army. The Ari monks were not ordinary religious, spiritual or devout monks, but warrior monks. He attacked Thaton (the Ramannadesa or Sriksetra) in 1057 CE and virtually carried away everything from there³. All the temples were targeted and the idols, were destroyed, seized and left out and sent to "Nat-Hlaung Kyaung," known as "the prison of the gods." Maung Htn Aung, an expert of the Burmese chronicles described the events as follows⁴:

"When Anawrahta made Theravada Buddhism the national religion of the country there was opposition from the Aris, as could be expected, and because they exercised great influence over the people, the king had no choice but to resort to religious persecution. The Ari monks were unfrocked and made to serve in the royal armies. All the images of the gods of the planets and the Hindu gods were seized and placed in a Vishnu temple, which was renamed 'the prison of the Gods'".

Why one form of Buddhism – Mahayanam - should be

hated by another form of Buddhism - Hinayanam or Theravada - is inexplicable. Therefore, a reasonable doubt arises that the Ari group could be Vaishnavite, existing in those areas. Moreover, Buddhism was atheistic, without idol worship, rites, rituals etc., involving other paraphernalia. Yet, Anawrahta targeted Ari believers and their head monk.

Who were Ari monks and the origin of Shin Araham

The Ari monks were nothing but monks of "Ari Buddhism," practicing tantric worship; Ari Gaing was the name given to the religious practice common in Burma, existing since the 7th cent CE, introduced by Indian or Tibetan traders. Their frescoes of a Nepalese or north Bengali type are still to be seen at shrines near Pagan and their influence spread to northern Burma⁵. These Tantric groups entered Burma through Assam, Manipur and Bengal. The Venerable Shin Araham, formally known as Dhammadassi Mahathera, (c. 1034 – 1115 CE) was the monk who converted the Pagan Kingdom to Theravada Buddhism (c. 1056 to 1115 CE). The monk, though considered to be a native of the Thaton Kingdom, was born to a Brahmana. Evidence strongly suggests that the Theravada Buddhism of Shin Araham and early Pagan was strongly influenced by Hinduism as compared to later and more orthodox standards. Within 75 years of Shin Araham's death, the Buddhism of Pagan realigned with the Mahavihara school of Ceylon, although the Kanchipuram-Thaton school lasted 200 more years before finally dying out. Buddhism was flourishing in Kanchipuram during the 2nd – 5th cent CE period with the teachers Aryadeva (successor of Nagarjuna), Dinnaga, Dhammapada and others. The Buddhist institutions were instrumental in spreading Theravada Buddhism to the Mon Kingdom of Burma and Thailand. Thus, the South Indian influence has been significant in the south of the Mon Kingdom of Thaton, which adopted its Buddhism from Conjeevaram. Incidentally, the statue of Sri Araham appears as a Vaishnavite. His establishment of four temples at four places for worship four divisions of time is a proof⁶. The Burmese chronicles report that Shin Araham was born of a Brahmana's virgin wife and this is evidently to suppress the facts or erase the historical fact of

the Kanchipuram connection. Therefore, Vaishnavites of Thaton region might have been converted to Theraada Buddhism by the guru Shin Arahan.

Why have the historians been silent about the pre-Theravada religion of Burma?

As there has not been any evidence available, and only the Burmese chronicles are available, historians start history from the 12th century CE, dubbing earlier history as myth, as it has been based on Purana like narratives. However, D. G. E. Hall accepts the narrative of the Alexandrian scholar, Ptolemy's note that the inhabitants of the Irawaddy Delta were cannibals⁷ i.e. human-flesh eaters. Ironically, Ptolemy's writings are doubted now and the manuscripts attributed to him are available only from 1300 CE without any authenticity*. In this context, the Vajrayana, Vamachara, Kapalika and other Tantric cults would have indulged in such practices that were shunned by others. Moreover, as the Burmese chronicles begin with the supposed foundations of Taguauung in 850 BCE, obviously copying from the Indian legends in Sanskrit and Pali, they are not acceptable as history. G. H. Luce⁸ pointed out Burma's debtness to Pagan. About the religion that existed, he observed that, "*It was mixed up with Hindu Brahmanaic cults, Vaisnavism in particular. It was tinged with Mahayanism, and towards the end of the dynasty at least with Tantrism. It rested doubtless on a deep primitive bed of Naga and Nat worship. The Buddhism itself was extraordinarily anthropomorphic.*" Already, Nihar Ranjan Ray elaborated as to how both Vaishnavism and Saivism existed with sculptural evidence¹⁰. He also pointed out the impact of Sanskrit on the philosophy, ethics, literature and other aspects of the people¹¹. About the Ari sect, he has dealt with it in one chapter along with another group, "Samanakuttakas," all were following tantric Buddhism¹².

Whether the Samanakuttas were Tantric Buddhists, Jains or heretics of other faith

The Samanakuttakas were known as pseudo recluses, posing as Buddhists; they used to mislead the laity with false

religious doctrines and debased the Buddhist religion by corrupt practices. The Sasanavamsa¹³ notes that the Samanakuttakas were from Tambadipa (comprising districts of Pagan Ava, Pinya and Myemzaim) in the Maramma circle or Burma proper and the town Arimaddana (Pagan) was their stronghold. All their religious manoeuvres, were basically connected with the recital of Paritta [protecting mantras¹⁴]. Even the murderers, parricides and perpetrators of heinous crimes were expiated from the sins committed by way of reciting particular portions of Paritta. Considering the rituals followed, some scholars¹⁵ hold that they were the Mahayanists practicing Tantricism, as their behaviour resembled the Vamacharis and Kapalikas. Therefore, it could not have happened immediately in the 11th or 12th century. In Tamil, Samana denotes Jains. Here, though, the Samanakuttas were defrocked and dress removed, as has been described, they were considered as "heretical" only. As the Tantric groups were trying to interfere with the armies of the fighting dynasties, they might have also acted as mercenaries switching loyalties to different groups. In any case, the religious activities exhibited among the groups prove that they were engaged in violent activities affecting the common people.

The Thirty-seven Nat devatas and their accommodation by Anawratha in Theravada Buddhism

As mentioned above, Anawratha wanted to contain the influence of the Aris or Arans and elevate Theravada Buddhism as the state religion. Thus, the "Thirty-six Nats" were made to "Thirty-seven Nats" and slowly accepted and accommodated in Theravada Buddhism¹⁶. The origin of the word "Nat" is unclear. It may be derived from the Hindu term "Natha," which means lord, saviour or protector. As the Nathas or Devas or spirits of different categories had been the protecting gods, guards of the temples and security personnel, they were treated accordingly. As westerners interpret, it is not spirit worship, but worship of their earlier gods, evidently Hindu, as they were defeated and sent to Nath laung kyaung temple. In the analysis of these 36-Nats, Maung Htn Aung pointed out that the 36 suffered tragic and violent death affecting the psyche of the common people. Thus, in spite of oppression and

suppression, the 36-deities still reign supreme in the minds and hearts of the people¹⁷. Festivals are held and the Nat images taken in procession with lakhs of believers. When the *devas* were placed under the six categories, Catumaharajika, Tavatimsa, Yama, Tusita, Nimmamanarati and Parinimmitavasavati, the number of celestial and human years enumerated clearly show that they were imitated from the *yuga* calculation of the Hindus. Incidentally, the whole period coming to 216,000,000 is nothing but half of 432,000,000 i.e. Hindu Mahayuga. Therefore, it is evident that the new religion imposed by Anawratha was nothing but old wine in a new bottle. Thus, if the names, symbols, myths, stories, sculptural depictions and paintings of the "Thirty-seven Nats" are critically analyzed, they appear to be different Hindu gods and goddesses. Perhaps, because of the Śaiva influence, the 63 Nayanmars stories would have been distorted and the number reduced to 37. The defeated or fallen or destroyed gods were incorporated and exploited as guards, door-keepers, boundary protecting deities, etc. The transfer of such myths from one / defeated / suppressed religion to another could be noted.

A war between Peikthano and Duttabaung – was it between Śaivites and Vaishnavites or otherwise?

J.G. Scott¹⁸ gives the following details, "*At Thare Kettara, the excavations and the pagodas at Yathe-myo, as the old site, near Hmawza, is now called. Buddhism and Brahmanism were mixed, just as they were at Thaton, but at Yathe-myo there are proofs, whereas in the old Savarnabhumi there are none. The two most interesting pagodas in the Hermit City are the Bebe and the Bawbaw-gyi. The Bebe enshrines a stone, inscribed in an unknown character, which is conjectured to be Pyu. It may date from the seventh century, though the Pyu sept survived till the eleventh. The Bawbaw-gyi is still more interesting, for, in addition to a presentation of the Buddha taking food just before attaining Nirvana, a number of terracotta plaques have been found displaying the Linga, indicating the presence of Śivaism. Further, there is a fairy tale of a war between Peikthano in the Magwe district, and Duttabaung, of Hsare Kettara. The princess*

of Peikthano had a magic drum, and the Prome king had three eyes. Peikthano is the Burmese transliteration of Vishnu, and Śiva had three eyes. The conclusion is that the hostilities symbolize the struggle between Śivaism and Vaishnavism. The princess lost her magic drum, but the fight cost Duttabaung one of his eyes". This symbolically proves the destruction of idols and sculptures of Śiva and Vishnu and conversion of it into Buddhist. Thus, the Buddha idols, sculptures and images appear to be Vishnu and Śiva with explicit features. The dominant Buddhist groups subdued these groups and finally Theravada Buddhists dominated all, because of the royal patronage. Here, though, "*a war between Peikthano in the Magwe district, and Duttabaung, of Hsare Kettara,*" is mentioned in a fairy tale, the archaeological evidences prove that there was a religious strife between the groups. The fight between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism had been explicit. Evidently, Anawratha took not only wealth and experts from Thaton, but also the priests and teachers including Shin Arahan forcefully. As he appears to be a Vaishnavite, the Buddhist intrusion, conversion and manipulation must have divided the believers of other kingdoms. Thus, whenever, smaller groups had sided with the dominant groups, their identities merged and disappear, and the skirmishes and riots appear between different groups.

Decoding the myth and folklore of the three-eyed King Duttabaung¹⁹

The advent of the three-eyed king was prophesied by Buddha himself according to the Burmese chronicles. According to the story, a piece of cow-dung which was floating in the sea, came to Buddha. At the same time, a male mole also came to him. On seeing these two omens, he explained to Ananda that the mole would be incarnated as Duttabaung. When Buddha came to the house of the mole, he made offerings, but his wife could not, as she was sleeping. On waking up, she came to know that Buddha came and went away, so she got angry and decided to take a revenge against her husband in the next birth. Thus, Duttabaung was reborn as a prince in 422 BCE and was married to Pekoano. Sakra, a celestial king offered him a drum and a spear with extraordinary

power that could control his entire kingdom. However, slowly, his power started diminishing as he stopped Buddhism and resorted to Nat religion. And his wife found that it was the right time to take revenge. Thus, when he travelled by a boat on the sea, the sea waters split and he was engulfed and taken to Nagaland. Thus, her revenge was fulfilled. Here, the duo Pekaoano and Duttbuang were wife and husband, but, in another myth, they were Vishnu and Śiva. This is similar to Parvati / Dhakshayini, who took revenge against Śiva. Here, the three-eyes, drum and spear point to Śiva with Damaru and Trishul. Thus, this story proves the subjugation of Saivism in Brahmadesa, at a particular time, before Anawaratha i.e., 12th Cent CE. Duttabaung submerging and going to Nagaland might imply that he was excommunicated to the North East of India.

Śiva sculptures found at different places of Burma

The Śiva sculptures with Parvati, Trimurthy etc., were found at various places in Burma dated to first century to 12th century CE. Some of them are listed as follows:

1. The sculpture at Mrauk-U,
2. Bull from the Vesali excavations
3. Dwarapala Nandisa sculpture found near Wethali village²⁰,
4. Linga base found near Nibuzashrik
5. Śiva and Parvati from Thotan, kept in the Rangoon University library.
6. Shiba from Nat-hlaung-byang, Pagan city.
7. Śiva found among Trimurty, arising from the navel of Vishnu at Thotan, Srikshetra
8. Nandi on a ring.
9. The next important Śiva image in Burma is at present housed at the entrance of the Ananda Museum, Pagan, where it was removed from the Nat-hlaung kyaung. One more Śiva image is also there.
10. Typical sculptures and broken heads found at different places and kept in the museums.

The broken sculptures, disappeared during the wars clearly prove that the Śiva temples were purposely demolished. Noel P. Singer has evidence show how a *Linga* was converted to a *caitya-stupa*, Daksinamurti / Pichandavar to Buddha, by chiseling out outer portions. The broken sculpture typical to South India, particularly, Tamil Nadu also proves the Saivite connection with these areas.

Śiva temples existed at Thaton, Arakkan regions

According to the story, Vishnu presided at the foundation, and he was helped by six other divinities, viz., Gavampati, Indra, Naga, Garuda, Candi and Paramevara. Thus, the Śaiva Gods Candi and Parameswara are noted, but, they were considered subordinate to Vishnu. Coins recovered from the Arakkan region, prove the existence of Śiva worship. Coins bearing Saivite symbols, viz., the trident of Śiva on the reverse and a recumbent humped bull on the obverse have been found. The coins referred to above, may, likewise, on paleographic grounds be said to range over a period of the 4th to the 10th century CE. From this, N.R. Ray²¹ opined that "...it is thus reasonable to conjecture that the Candara dynasty of kings of Arakan who ruled from c. 400 CE to c. 1000 CE belonged to the Brahmanical fold and were evidently followers of the cult of Śiva...some coins bear the symbols of both conch-shell and trident..." Four Trimurti figures containing Śiva have been found that were originally formed part of the Shwezayan pagoda / temple, but only three are available now in the Rangoon museum. The present Buddhist pagoda at Shwezayan was built in the 14th or 15th century CE. In view of the above information Saivism was flourishing from the 5th to 10th centuries and thereafter, with the rise of Buddhism, the Śiva temples were destroyed and the images are found in the museums.

The movement of stone workers, sculptors and sthapatīs from South India to Burma

J.G. Scott noted that, "The presence of a considerable number of South Indian Tamils through the centuries is attested by the well-known Grantha-Tamil inscription of Pagam attesting

the existence of a Vishnu temple built there by Vanadesi Merchants and a gift to the temple made in the 13th century by a merchant from one of the port towns on the Malabar coast," in other words, stone workers, sculptors and *sthapatis* continued to come here because of the demand in reconstruction. Scott²² recorded in another place that, "The connection with India was still maintained, and the form of many of the Pagan temples suggests architects from the Dekkhan, along with others, which certainly point to Cinghalese models. Many of the images and their attitudes are quite South Indian, and the square structures with mandapas, or porches, instead of the round tumulus, to say nothing of the vaulted chambers and corridor passages, all suggest Indian influence rather than the present conical style of pagoda". Thus, even after the conversion of the Vaishnavites and Saivites to Buddhism, the Hindus or Indians were encouraged to come there and engage in the construction of *caityas* and *viharas*.

Resemblance between Buddhism, Saivism and Vaishnavism

It is logical and historical that the Hindu faith entered the South-east Asian region or existed side by side, as in India. There was confusion among the westerners, Europeans and other explorers till the 17th-18th centuries about "India," as amply exhibited in their cartography. In fact, explorers and sailors had recorded in their writings about the resemblance between Buddhism and Saivism and Vaishnavism. In 1786, Flouest, the traveler sent his accounts, but was not published²³. John Craford [1783-1868] in his account²⁴ noted that, the "affinity between the religion of Siam, China, Japan, and Thibet, and that of Hindustan... with the religion of Arracan and Pegu we are not much acquainted; but, as far as I had been able to learn, it is almost the same with that of Siam." Brian Hodgson²⁵ also noted in detail, "It is the purpose of the following paper to furnish to those, who have means and inclination to follow them out, a few hints relative to the extreme resemblance that prevails between many of the symbols of Buddhism and Saivism.... When, in this country in which I reside, I observed images that were most apparently Saiva placed in the precincts of Saugata [Buddhist] temples, I was at first inclined to consider the circumstance as an

incongruity, arising out of ignorant confusion of the two creeds by the people of this country..... I showed these monuments to a well informed old Buddha, and asked him what he thought of them, particularly the famous Trimurti image of the Cave Temple of the west. He recognized it as a genuine Buddha image! As did many others, declared by our writers to be Saiva....". As pointed out above, some idols and sculptures were modified, i.e., Vishnu reclining sculptures converted to Buddhist, as "Maya's dream" and Bodhisatvas. The Śiva images typically appearing as Pitchandavar or Dakshinamurthy were converted into Buddhist sculptures. Of course, many Brahma sculptures were straight away converted into Buddhist.

Like merchant-warriors, priest-warriors were also there in sea and long distance sojourns and missions

That Anawratha converted Ari monks and inducted them into his army proves that they were warrior monks. However, some Saivites could have escaped from the persecution and started moving towards their places of origin. When they escaped, they tried to join their own or like-minded groups. When the Cholas' armies came there, they joined them. In other words, the so-called Brahmanas could not have been simply or simple "Brahmanas" but of the warrior class, as they had to face many enemies while travelling a long distance. Thus, not only, the merchants, but also, religious functionaries, priests and such people were expected to protect themselves.

Sri Ksetra, Pya, Piao, Prome region

Harivikrama name found in the funerary urn inscription dated to 695 CE points to the fact of dominance of "Hari," that could be pronounced and written as "Ari." The warriors, Dwarapalakas or temple guards of Sri Ksetra, Pyu were carrying Garuda-dwaja and Chakra-dwaja, but that no Vishnu is found in the temple proves that either the Vishnu idol was removed or replaced with the Buddha idol or destroyed, keeping the other temple architectural paraphernalia. As Angkor wat is the biggest Vishnu temple in the world, the domination of Vaishnavism is implied. With the

intrusion of influential Buddhist sects, the Vaishnavite believers would have been reduced to smaller groups. Thus, the Tantric and other Buddhist members could have infiltrated Vaishnavite groups, so that the Ari sect appeared or described as unorthodox, heretic and so on. However, the Shin Arahant of Ari sect only could promote the state religion of Theravada. The sculptures of Vishnu with four hands sitting, Vishnu in reclining position with three gods above, etc., found prove the fact.

The Brahmana element in Buddhism

The folklore or traditional account of every Southeast Asian country invariably and faithfully incorporated an event of a Kaundinya Brahmana coming there from South India, marrying a local girl or Naga girl and begetting progeny and cultural colonization thereafter. Just like the Abbasid period, the Buddhist rulers of China, Japan and SEA countries invited Brahmanas for the translation of Sanskrit works into Pali, Chinese and other local languages. Amoghavajra (704-774 CE) was one of the celebrated Buddhist monks in the Chinese records, who belonged to a Brahmana family of North India²⁶. Vajrabodhi (671-741 CE) was a prominent Buddhist (Brahmana) monk associated with the transmission of Tantricism to China. His father was an *acharya* in Kanchipuram, belonging to Malaya in South India near the Potalaka Mountain²⁷. The consecration rites for the palace were conducted by various types of Hindu Brahmana rituals, Brahmana astrologers and Buddhist clerics, a combination that has marked most Southeast Asian courts from the very beginning²⁸. They were also specifically invited for the consecration ceremonies, installation of Buddhist idols and coronation of the kings²⁹. For the eye-opening ceremony [kaigen rites] of the Daibutsu [the Big Buddha], Bodhisena, a South Indian Brahmana was invited to perform in 744 CE³⁰. He was highly honoured by the Japanese court and was popular as Baramon Sojo or the Brahman Buddhist Bishop³¹. He lived in Daian-ji temple and taught Sanskrit, but Fabio Rambelli³², points out that "*Despite his fame and exalted role during the final years of the Nara period (710-84 CE) or perhaps precisely because of that, Bodhisena was marginalized in the subsequent developments of Japanese Buddhism and very little*

is known about him today". Whether Brahmanas were exploited and forgotten or something happened to them is not known. During the Khmer period, many Brahmanas came to Cambodia for different religious purposes. In Burma, Ari Arant was forced to help Anawratha to promote Theravada and persecute his own religious believers.

Prohibition of Brahmanas crossing seas and oceans

The Sramanas and Brahmanas have always worked together, as far as religious activities were concerned, in spite of theological differences. The moment Jain and Buddhist religions started worshipping their leaders as gods with the extended lineages before them, deification also continued in all other activities. The Jain and Buddhist groups were engaged in maritime trade and mission activities. Though they opposed the faith of the Brahmanas, they accepted their conduct of rites, rituals and ceremonies, as they agreed with other philosophy, ethics, and justice. *Manusmriti* was so popular among the South East-Asian countries, as could be noted from the palm-leaf books and inscriptions. However, at one stage, as the Buddhists felt that the Brahmanas were given undue importance in their religious activities, they started developing hatred towards them. Hindus, of heretical, unorthodox and extreme faiths, tried to harass the Brahmanas. At one stage, they promulgated the dictum through rulers that Brahmanas should not cross the seas and oceans. In other words, Brahmanas travelling by road were perhaps not banned or prohibited³³. During the medieval period, the Kaliyuga *varjyas* made injunctions specifically to the effect that Brahmanas should not cross sea / ocean³⁴. From the Jataka tales, it is known that the Bodhisattvas, Buddhaghoshas and others were Brahmanas and they use to travel by boats and ships very often³⁵. Thus, how the Brahmanas were treated by the converted Buddhist Brahmanas could be noted in this context.

How had neo-Buddhism driven away the Hindus and their religion during the 12th-13th centuries?

How the Indians were treated by the Chinese has been discussed in the maritime trade context. With the rise of the

neo-Confucius doctrine mixed with Buddhism, the Chinese rulers tried to suppress the non-Chinese believers. They were virtually expelled from port cities like Quanzhou etc. In the 11th century, two Chola ambassadors were found dead mysteriously in the port city of Quanzhou³⁶. The Vice-Minister of Rajaraja, known as Soli San-wan proceeded to Guangzhou, China in 1015 CE in a diplomatic embassy, heading a 52-member mission³⁷. Travelling for 1150 days (more than three years), they reached Guangzhou to meet the Song emperor. The presentation ceremony was held in Kaifeng³⁸, the then capital of Guangzhou on October 15, 1015. They left Tanjore in 1012 and reached Kaifeng in 1015. After the mission, when they were returning in 1016, San-wan died mysteriously in Xiangyi, in Sui county of Henan province on the Grand Canal. In 1020, Rajendra sent Pa-lan-de-malie-di to offer tribute, but he died of an illness on his arrival at Guangzhou³⁹. The Śiva-Vishnu temple at Quanzhou was also demolished and their parts were used up in building Buddhist temples and parts consigned to a maritime museum. By 1175, the Jodo sect, Jodo-shin and Zen Buddhism changed the religious conditions. Pre-Buddhist deities were added in their rituals, increasing the esoteric aspects. Esoteric Buddhism slowly got the patronage of the rulers. Mandala texts were produced to protect the State and the kings and much interest was shown in the Mahavairocana Sutra and the Commentary. All these show that the Buddhism followed by the Japanese was heading towards an aggressive category involving conflicts and battles. In the same way, Theravada Buddhism dominated Burma / Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka. Thus, with the rise of Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism had been subdued during the course of time in Southeast Asia. Mahayana Buddhism survives in Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia with a dwindling strength of believers. In Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia, it remains a strong minority. Consequently, the Śaivas were also reduced to a minority.

Going to Kailaya, attaining Kailash prapti and Śivaloka-mukti:

As noted, not only Kaundinya Brahmanas, other Brahmanas were also going to the Southeast Asian region, as they were

Vishnu-kshetra, Brahma-kshetra and Śiva-kshetra. Building high temples for their God was considered to be the most sacred duty by the rulers and believers. Thus, big temples were constructed for the Trimurti – Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva. However, only Vishnu temples are available today. The Brahma temples were almost totally destroyed and only a few survived in Brahmadeśa. A story was floated as to how Śiva cursed Brahma so that he would not have any temple at all anywhere on the earth. However, ironically, in the area above, the Brahmadeśa and Vishnudevas, where, a huge Vishnu temple stands, no Śiva temple survives today. Coming to the devotees, priests and others, they used to reach these places by walk, by riding horses and by boat and ship, so they took many months to reach their destinations. Moreover, many of the people where he lived there had not returned and their whereabouts were not known. So, after waiting for the mandatory period, as per the *sastra*, the relatives used to conduct last rites declaring that they had attained Kailasa *prapti* and *mukti*, and thus liberated them from his ethereal world. Of course, there were few stories to the effect that some of them returned to see that their wives were married and living happily and so on. By and large, when it was declared that somebody attained “Śivalokaprapti / Kailasa *mukti*,” it was implied that he was no more. Even in the case of Nayanmars, who had attained the status of Kailasa *prapti*, some had returned⁴⁰. Perhaps their non-return has been described differently – Tirunavukkarasar was transported back to Tiruvaiyaru, the Dakshina Kailasa; Karaikkal Ammaiyar, in spite of suffering herself by walking, crawling etc., returned to Tiruvangadu; Sundaramurthy Nayanar reached on a white elephant (implying Burma); Pusalar merged with Linga attained Kailasa *prapti* and so on.

The concept of India increasing to “Greater India” and reversing back:

Till the medieval period, the European cartographers believed and depicted two Indias on their maps – India proper and the India beyond. Of course, the whole ocean was known as “Hindu Maha Sagar,” now, known as the Indian Ocean. Thus, the Indians or Hindus living there, in South-east Asian countries, suddenly disappeared by the 13th century with the rise of China as

a maritime power and the disappearance of the Imperial Cholas. And the magnificent temples built for Brahma, Vishnu, Śiva and other Hindu divinities had also either reduced to mounds with trees growing around or in demolished condition. The memories, writings and recordings of the European explorers, sailors and rulers prove that the same conditions prevailed till the 17th and 18th centuries. With the rise of Communism and Islam, the cultural, religious and social processes of South-east Asia was affected considerably. The Chinese and Japanese have been trying to control them through Buddhism. In spite of the formation of a "Greater India Society" by historians like R. C. Majumdar (1888–1980), the philologists Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1890–1977) and P. C. Bagchi (1898–1956), and historians Phanindranath Bose and Kalidas Nag (1891–1966), Indians could not compete with others.

Sectorial strifes, intra-religious struggle and inter-religious violence made Indians disappear:

So, what had happened after 12th–13th centuries, has to be analyzed critically. Buddhism played a key-role in uniting the people of China, Japan and the South-east Asian countries with India. Indians contributed extensively to Buddhism, Buddhist monuments, scriptures, rites, ceremonies and other liturgical and social processes. As the Chinese and Arabs / Mohammedans started dominating, the Buddhist sects got divided further and they could not tolerate other Indian faiths. Not only did the converted Buddhists fight with each other, but they also fought the Vaishnavas and Śaivas. The converted Vaishnavites and Śaivites fought each other under new Buddhist banners, leading to their downfall. With political patronage, the Theravada sects engaged themselves in the destruction of places of worship, etc. The Mohammedans too, later contributed their mite, without any remorse. When the Buddhists converted to Islam, the converted worked faithfully for their new faith. Thus, the Indians and their places of worship became soft targets.

References

1. Anawratha was the 42nd King of the Bagan dynasty that traced its origin to c.850 BCE.
2. Theravada Buddhism ["Doctrine of the Elders,"] has been the more conservative of the two major traditions of Buddhism (the other being Mahayana), which developed from Hinayana Buddhism and the texts are in Pali. It is practiced mainly in Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos.
Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism share the same core beliefs and devotion to the life and teaching of Buddha, but they do have some differences. Theravada Buddhism is associated with South East Asia and is perhaps closer to the original Indian form of Buddhism.
3. Thaton was absolutely annihilated. King Manuha, the Books of the Law, the monks, and the whole body of the people were carried off in a mass. There were "five elephant loads of Buddhist scriptures and five hundred Buddhist monks," and in particular there were all the temple and pagoda builders, who, in the succeeding years, raised the temples which make the deserted capital on the Irrawaddy so remarkable a place. J. G. Scott, *Burma from the earliest times to the present day*, 1924, p33.
4. Maung Htin Aung, *Folk Elements in Burmese Buddhism*, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, USA, 1962, p.3. and U. Nandacara, *The Concept of Nat-worship Among Theravada Buddhists in Myanmar*, University of Thailand, 2014, p.3
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There are four *Simās* in Mandalay that were consecrated by

Shin Arahāṃ. They are:-

- (1) Sunrise *Simā*, (2) Noon *Simā*, (3) Sunset *Simā* and (4) Midnight *Simā*. This is coinciding with the time-reckoning of Aryabhata astronomical school.
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10. Nihar Ranjan Ray, *Brahmanaical Gods in Burma – Chapter of Indian art and Iconography*, University of Calcutta, 1932. See Śiva or Saivism, pp.50-63.
11. Nihar Ranjan Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma*, University of Calcutta, 1936.
12. Nihar Ranjan Ray, op.cit., chapter IV, The Ari sect and the Samanakutta: Tantric Buddhism in Burma, pp.63-71.
13. Mabel Bode, *Sasanavamsa*, The Pali Text Society, London, 1897, see Dissertation and conclusion, pp.1-58.
14. Paritta, generally translated as "protection" or "safeguard," refers to the Buddhist practice of reciting certain verses and scriptures in order to ward off misfortune or danger.
15. The establishment of this heretical sect probably dates as far back as when the Tantric cult of North-Eastern zone of India and Bengal, deeply influenced a section of Buddhists, who partially adopted the cult and passed it over to their counterparts in Burma in a debased form., Some scholars, however, hold the view that these Samanakuttakas were none other than the off-shoots of the Mahayanists, who developed strong leanings towards Tantrism. The behaviour and practices of the Samanakuttakas resembled much to those of the Vamacaris (addicted to women) and Kapalikas (Tantric votaries of goddess Kali) in, Bengal.
16. The list had closed at thirty-six before Anawrahta, and it needed Anawrahta's prestige and power to change the number from thirty-six to thirty-seven. After Anawrahta,

no one dared to assume authority to change the number. However, with the passing of time the list varied, for some old Nats were displaced by new Nats, and the personalities of later characters became merged with those of earlier ones. This has misled some European scholars into scoffing at the number thirty-seven and to proceed to point out the existence of the 'thirty-eighth', 'thirty-ninth' and 'fortieth' Nats.

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33. Manusmriti, equated the sea going people to incendiaries, prisoners, those who are fed by the son of an adulteress, sellers of illicit liquor, bards, oilmen, or suborners to perjury. They were all offenders. The Bhaudhayana Dharma Sutra forbade orthodox Brahmanas to engage in sea travel and traffic, and prescribed penances and Penalties for transgressions. Still some Brahmanas transgressed the scriptures. It was not forbidden for other groups in the varna order. The prevailing Buddhist order placed restrictions on sea travel and traffic.
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37. It was also known as Canton or Kwangchow. It was the capital and the largest city of the Guangdong province. Guangzhou was an important port during the ancient times as far back as the Qin Dynasty. It served as a trading port on the "Silk Road on the Sea". The port became one of China's busiest ports during the Ming dynasty and Qing dynasty.
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